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KINGSBRIDGE
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Kingsbridge:
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Kingsbridge Urban District Council.

Medical Officer of Health's Report for the Year 1925.

GENTLEMEN.

I have the honour to present my Report for the year 1925.

1.—GENERAL STATISTICS.

The area of your District is 1.046 acres of land, 17 of tidal water, and 83 of foreshore.

The population is 2,925.

The Assessable Value of the District is £12,689.

A Penny Rate produces £50.

The number of inhabited houses is 867.

The number of families of separate occupiers is 876.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT..

The District consists of two portions ; one a low lying portion, situate on either side of the Estuary ; two, the part lying on the hills.

There are no slums in the Town, and all the houses and cottages with few exceptions, are kept in a good state of cleanliness.

In some of the courts the passages are narrow and there is a marked deficiency of light and air in the lower rooms.

OCCUPATION OF INHABITANTS.

The chief industries comprise a Steam Flour Mill, an Iron Foundry and Engineering Works, a Carriage Building Works, a Brewery, a Steam Laundry, a Timber Yard, and three or four Motor Works. With the exception of these industries, the occupation of the inhabitants is chiefly commercial, the town of Kingsbridge being the centre of a large agricultural district. There are two cattle markets held every month and during the last five years your Council has bought the Dodbrooke Market rights and built an up-to-date market-place so that the markets are no longer held in the streets.

2.—VITAL STATISTICS.

BIRTHS.

During the year there have been 51 births registered in your district Of these, 34 were males, and 17 females.

There was one illegitimate birth, a male.

The Birth Rate is 17.4 per 1,000 of population. That for England and Wales is 18.3.

DEATHS.

The number of deaths belonging to your district was 82.

The death rate is 10.9 per 1,000 of population. The death rate for England and Wales is 12.2.

There were 2 deaths from Tuberculosis, one male, aged 22, and one woman, aged 29.

Heart disease accounted for 6 deaths (3 male and 3 female).

Influenza accounted for 2 deaths.

Cancer accounted for 3.

There was one death from Pneumonia.

There was one accidental death.

No woman died in or in consequence of child-birth.

There were no deaths from any of the Zygmotic diseases.

Three infants died under one year (2 males and one female). One of these, a male, was illegitimate. This gives an infantile mortality rate of 59.8 per 1,000 births.

3.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICE.

There is no infectious disease hospital, and no Small-pox hospital other than that provided by the Devon County Council. In my opinion, an Infectious Disease Hospital is needed.

Use is made in cases of sickness of the Kingsbridge and District Cottage Hospital and the Plymouth General Hospitals, and the Poor Law Infirmary.

There are Sanatoria at Hawkmoor and Torquay for Tuberculous cases, provided by the Devon County Council.

There are no ambulance facilities for infectious diseases, but there is an ambulance at Kingsbridge which is available on payment for ordinary cases of sickness.

The Poor Law Infirmary at Kingsbridge is the only Institution provided for unmarried mothers' illegitimate children, and homeless children in the district.

There are no Clinics or Treatment Centres in your area.

A part time Medical Officer of Health and a Sanitary Surveyor form your Staff.

There are no midwives practising in the town, as far as I am aware who will attend maternity cases without a medical man being engaged.

There is a District Nurse in the district who receives a gratuity from the town Charities ; your Council subscribes nothing to her.

4.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water Supply.—The water which supplies the district is drawn from three sources :—

(1)—West Alvington Supply which is pumped to a reservoir at the top of West Alvington Hill and is thence distributed to the higher levels of the town. During the last five years your Council has increased this supply by taking in springs from Woodhouse.

(2)—Coombe Royal Supply which is collected on the Coombe Royal Estate at the Northern end of the town, and is conducted into a reservoir and is used to supply the lower levels of the main street.

(3)—Croft Supply, which is collected from Croft Farm, and supplies most of the houses in Church Street and the rest of Dodbrooke.

The water supply is pure and generally sufficient for the supply of the District. In a dry summer, however, care has to be taken to prevent waste and to provide an equal distribution of water to the various parts of the district.

Sewage.—The whole of the town has a water borne sewage system which discharges into the Estuary about a mile distant from the town. In my opinion the system should be improved, as I reported to your Council in a special report presented to your Council in June, 1919.

Scavenging.—Refuse is collected daily and is then dumped on the Quay at New Bridge. This dump is in my opinion a harbour for rats, and is a most undesirable way of getting rid of the town refuse.

5.—INSPECTIONS AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Bakehouses.—There are 6 bakehouses in the town. All have been periodically inspected and found satisfactory.

Dairies and Cowsheds.—There are 13 registered dairies and cowsheds in the District. These are in a good condition, and are well whitewashed and kept clean.

The milk in the district is of excellent quality.

Meat.—Your Sanitary Inspector is also your Meat Inspector.

The meat is of good quality, but much too high in price.

6.—INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

There has been no serious epidemic of Infectious Disease during the year, nor has there been for the last five years.

I have tabulated the number of principal infectious diseases which have occurred since 1920.

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	Total	Total Deaths for 5 years.
Diphtheria	0	12	1	1	0	14	1
Scarlet Fever	0	0	1	0	4	5	0
Enteric	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Pneumonia	3	2	1	4	1	11	7
Tuberculosis	3	12	4	2	1	22	16

The County Council provides facilities for Bacteriological examination in suspected cases of Tuberculosis of the Lungs, Typhoid and Diphtheria. Full advantage is taken of these facilities, both in suspected cases and contacts. Diphtheria anti-toxin is kept in stock by the chemists and can be obtained immediately it is required.

7.—HOUSING.

The general housing conditions are good, but there are a few cases of overcrowding. Your Council has under consideration a scheme for building cottages.

HOUSING STATISTICS.

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	Total for 5 years.
Number of New Houses Erected :						
(*a*) Total including number given separately under (*b*)	6	5	3	3	2	19
(*b*) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :					2	2
(1) By the Local Authority	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(2) By other bodies or persons	Nil	Nil	Nil	3	Nil	3
Without State assistance...	6	5	3	Nil	Nil	14
I—Unfit Dwelling-houses Inspection :						
(1) Total number inspected for defects under P.H. or H Acts	30	50	40	30	50	200
(2) No. inspected and records made ...	30	25	40	30	30	155
(3) No. found dangerous and unfit for human habitation	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	2
(4) No. (exclusive of 3) found not in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	2
II.—No. rendered fit for habitation without formal notices or action	5	12	12	Nil	3	32
III.—(A)—Action under Statutory Powers of Section 3 of Housing Act, 1925.						
(1) No. for which notices were served requiring repairs	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	1	2
(2) No. rendered fit after service of formal notices						
(*a*) By Owners	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1
(*b*) By the Local Authority in default of Owners	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(3) No. for which closing orders were accepted by Owners	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	Total for 5 years
(B)—Proceedings under P. Health Acts :						
(1) No. for which notices were served for remedy of defects	15	6	4	8	3	36
(2) No. to which defects were remedied						
(*a*) By Owners	12	6	8	8	12	46
(*b*) By Local Authority in default of Owners	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(C)—Proceedings under Section 11, 14, 15, of Health Act, 1925 :						
(1) No. of Representations made with a view to closing orders	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(2) No. in respect of which Closing orders were made	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(3) No. in respect of which closing orders were determined, the houses having been made fit	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(4) No. in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(5) No. demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM TUDOR WEBB,

Medical Officer of Health.